

1.vi.1968.—E. P. WILTSHIRE, 140 Marsham Court, Marsham Street, London, S.W.1. 22.xi.1968.

**SUCCESSFUL PAIRING OF ACHERONTIA ATROPOS L. IN CAPTIVITY.**—Pairings of this species in captivity are apparently very rare, and only one such event is recorded in L. Hugh Newman's recent book "Hawk Moths of Great Britain and Europe," p. 54: the mating position described does not quite correspond with my own observations.

I had been trying for several years to obtain pairings in captivity, since the species is quite common in this area, but without success until last February. Two bred specimens had been placed in a cage outdoors for a night. Then a third moth (caught in the mercury vapour light trap) was added during the day, and about half an hour after sunset I went outside to inspect. Normally the moths give just an occasional squeak as they collide with each other whilst traversing the sides of the cage, but this time, as I got near I heard a most furious and prolonged squeaking. Shining a torch through the celluloid top of the cage I saw that a pairing was taking place and that the "odd man out" was trying to knock the other two apart by repeatedly flying against them, squeaking loudly all the while. I was so amazed by this performance that I watched quite motionless for a time, then, realising that the desired pairing might be broken up by the buffeting they were receiving, I inserted my arm through the trapdoor at the base of the cage and, by the light of the torch shining through the top, managed to grab the rejected suitor by the wing and got him out of the cage.

The pairing was still intact with the male on top of the female, grasping her with his legs but, as I watched (using the absolute minimum of light), he moved very slowly clockwise through 180°, until he hung head downwards in the normal mating position.

I then brought the cage indoors, and by photographing through the celluloid top, obtained excellent colour transparencies. The moths separated after an hour, probably due to their being so much disturbed.

A few weeks later I obtained another pairing. This took place some time during the night, and the pair remained in the normal mating position all day, only separating after I had photographed them at 6 p.m.—HILTON L. O'HEFFERNAN, 63 Keurboom Road, Newlands, C.P. South Africa. 25.xi.1968.

**THE WOOD-WASP SIREX GIGAS LINN. ATTACKING A BEE-HIVE.** — Doubtless most field workers in entomology have come across the large wood-wasp *Sirex gigas* Linn. at some time or other, but generally single specimens or a few only in the course of a day's work. Recently, browsing upon some back numbers of *The Zoologist*, I came across an account of a swarm of "hundreds", which attacked a bee-hive and drove out all the bees. It is contained in the issue for January 1863 at pages 8343-4, and the recorder was John A. Power, B.A., who was elected a Member of the Entomological Society in 1834 and (apparently) resigned in 1843. Through our Editor's kindness I reproduce it herewith *in extenso*. It will be interesting if other readers of the *Record* have had similar experiences:—

P.B.M.A.